

victorian homes | green sheep collective

It's easy being green

Whether you're planning a new home or an addition, sustainable design principles bring myriad benefits



Photography: Emma Cross Photographer

Dubbed Jill's House, this abode, situated in the Melbourne suburb of Northcote, is proof that sustainable architecture and good design do go hand-in-hand — and can produce a liveable home that doesn't cost the earth to build.

The homeowner, Jill, was looking for an architect who could understand her vision to convert a cold, poorly lit and damp terrace house into a functional and beautiful home. A home that would provide a comfortable lifestyle after retirement and allow her to indulge in her favourite hobby — gardening. For this, she turned to Green Sheep Collective.

Jill's House achieves a lot in a small space through the efficient use of the existing footprint and the addition of just 22sqm of space. By minimising the floor area, resource

consumption was reduced, costs were contained and the amount of energy needed to maintain, clean, heat and cool the home significantly lessened.

Wet areas are compact and functional, restored bedrooms maintain their historic charm and generous proportions, and the new open-plan living areas are naturally heated and cooled. They also have a great sense of light and space and connect seamlessly with the garden, allowing an easy flow from inside to out.

Thanks to the expertise of Green Sheep Collective, the comfort and energy efficiency of the house have been improved immeasurably — and in myriad ways. Despite an existing north wall along the boundary of the property, sunlight is now brought deep into the house via a raked ceiling paired with electric-operated clerestory windows that soar above the kitchen and dining areas, doubling





EXPERT TIP: You can enhance the energy efficiency of your home in countless ways, including low-e double glazing, cross ventilation and north-facing living areas.

as “stack effect” ventilation and distinguishing the new extension from the original Victorian dwelling.

The setback of the living room from the north boundary allows for a series of north-facing casement windows that naturally heat the living space in winter, and efficiently ventilate it in summer. Ceiling fans in the living spaces and bedrooms further reduce the need for artificial heating and cooling and there are eaves and external blinds which serve to moderate the sun.

A courtyard allows light, ventilation and garden views to all rooms of the house while a deck, rainwater tank (connected to the toilet, laundry and garden taps) and garden areas foster a connection with, and use of, outdoor spaces. Planting areas close to the house enable the easy harvest of fresh fruit and vegetables, encouraging a

sustainable lifestyle and catering to Jill’s love of gardening.

Green Sheep Collective researched alternatives to standard products so they could implement accredited green solutions. The list includes Forbo Marmoleum flooring, E-crete, Geopolymer concrete (including recycled slag and fly ash), E0 MDF cabinetry, low-VOC paints and recycled red bricks. The use of eco-friendly materials and products, in combination with the application of sustainable design principles, has given Jill a house that is comfortable, low maintenance and won’t cost the earth to run as she enjoys her retirement.

But Jill’s House, which was built by EngDev, doesn’t just have impressive eco-credentials. It is a vibrant, light-filled living space — in part due to the colours used throughout which were inspired by Jill’s favourite Derwent pencils from her childhood — where people can connect and enjoy life.

The facts

Location of home:
Northcote, Vic
Time taken to build: 5 months
Year completed: 2015

The figures

Size of home: 112sqm
Size of land: 173sqm
Bedrooms: 2
Bathrooms: 1
Floors: 1

The details

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